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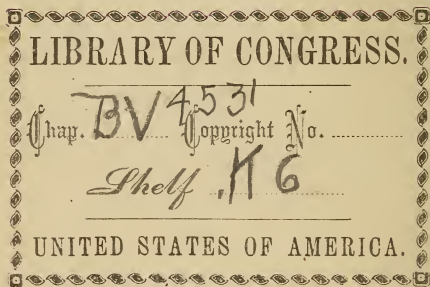
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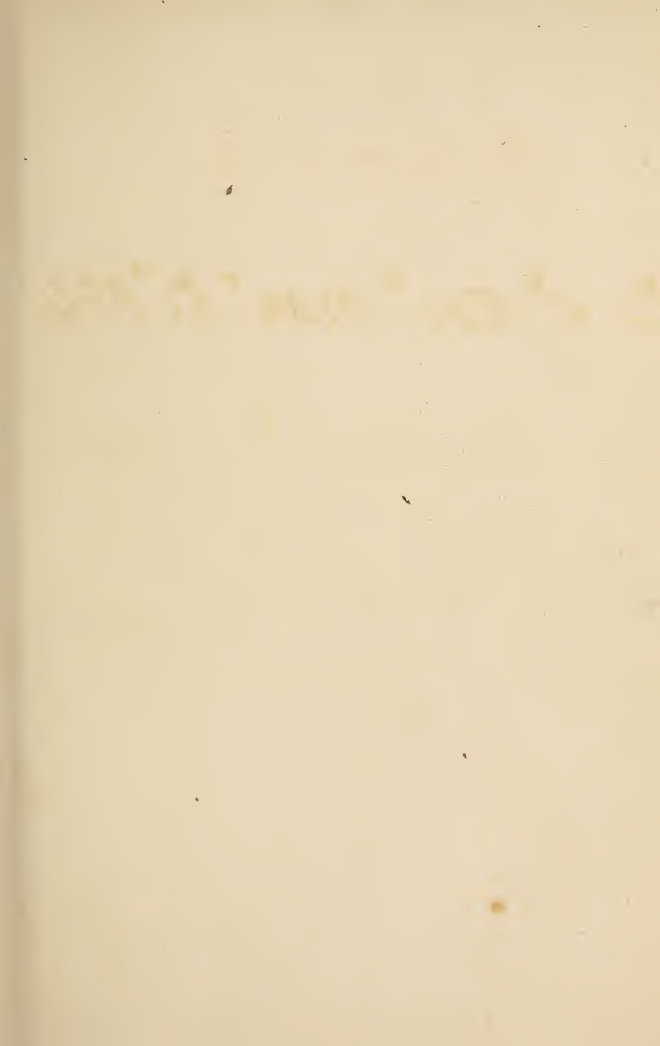
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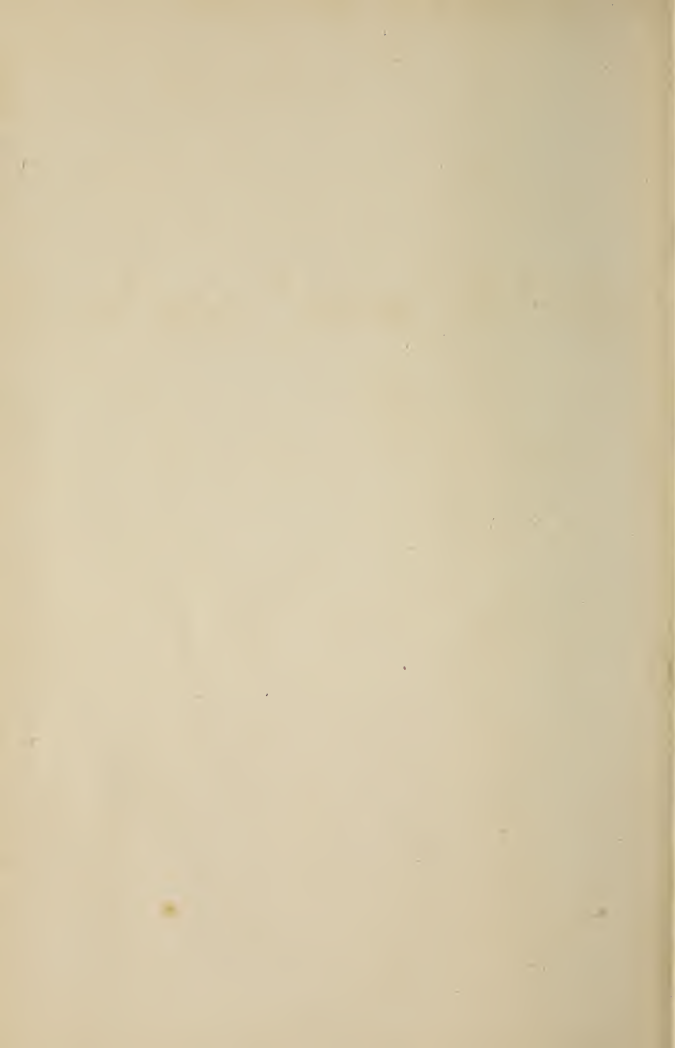
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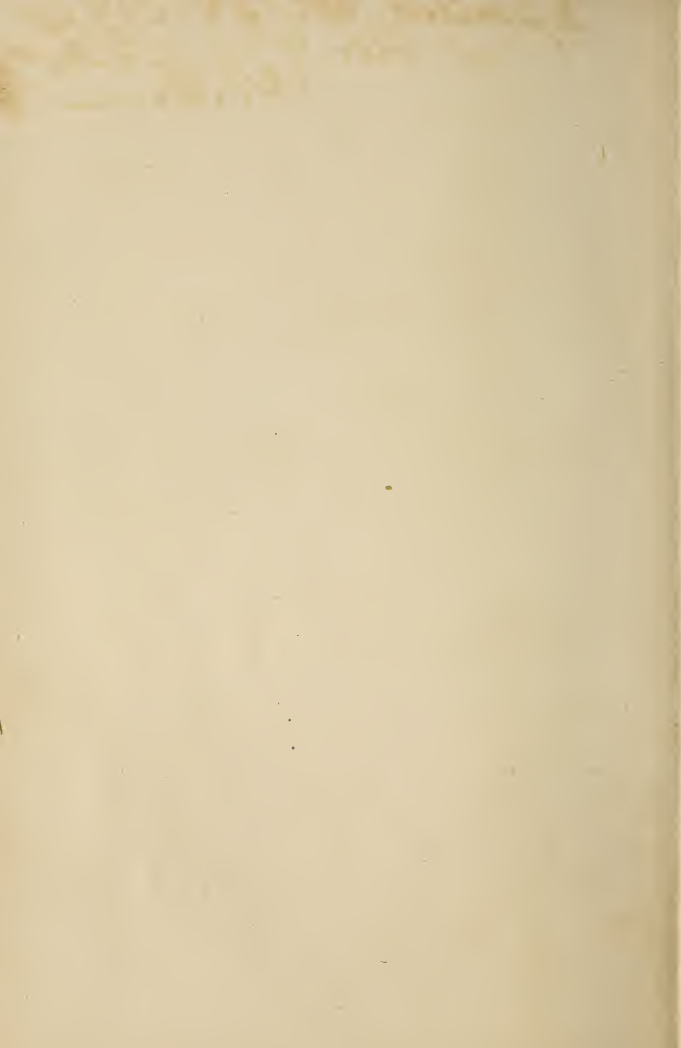
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*Deposited Oct 28 - 1841
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USEFUL AND HAPPY.

AN

ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG,

BY

*Edward
Norris*
REV. E. N. KIRK;

THE

PLEASANTNESS OF EARLY PIETY,

BY

*James
Pike*
J. G. PIKE;

AND THE

PLEASURES OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE,

BY

*James
A. James*
J. A. JAMES.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY DAYTON & SAXTON,

Successor to Gould, Newman & Saxton,

CORNER OF FULTON AND NASSAU-STREETS.

1841.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Address was delivered in behalf of the British and Foreign Young Men's Society, and first published in London. It has since been republished in this country, though in a form not so well adapted as that in which it now appears, to attract the attention of the young. It urges upon *them*, in a happy and impressive manner, the duty of "*personal improvement*," and the "*work of philanthropy*."

The valuable treatises which follow—from "Pike's Persuasives to Early Piety," and "The Christian Father's Present to his Children"—are added, with the hope of securing for them, in this connection, a more extensive perusal.

A Christian is the highest style of man.

* * * * *

Religion ! Providence ! an after-state !
Here is firm footing ; here is solid rock ;
This can support us ; all is sea besides ;
Sinks under us ; bestorms, and then devours.
His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

Young.

ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG.

I have written unto you, Young Men, because ye are strong.—1 *John*, ii, 14.

THE venerable writer of this epistle had passed through the five stages of human existence: infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. Time had now silvered his locks, and given its mellow tints to a character, which, even in his earliest manhood, had secured to him the title of “the beloved disciple.” There is, through the whole of this letter, a vein of exquisite simplicity and tenderness. He looked back to the period of youth, and remembered, how critical and important a season it had been to him. By the grace of God, his seed-time had been rightly employed, and he was now reaping a golden harvest of serenity, intelligence, the confidence of good men, usefulness, and a perfect assurance of eternal blessedness. He had

leaned upon the Saviour's bosom ; he had followed him the most closely in the hour of peril ; and he was now finding, in rich experience, that such was the best preparation that a young man could make, for the sober realities of age, and for an approaching eternity. Hence his counsels were turned to young men. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." His reference is not to the physical, but to the mental vigour of youth. Mental strength is a merciful gift of God, which may be wasted on trifles, or perverted to evil, or used for great and good purposes. It is the power which God has imparted to form our own character, and to control the character and destinies of others. In reference to the subject before us, we are not called upon to examine the manner, or time, in which this strength is imparted from our beneficent and merciful Creator. It is strength,—human strength, and, of course, derived strength, to which the apostle alludes. The praise and gratitude belong to God who gives it. To **man** belong the privilege and the responsibility of possessing it. Let our attention, then, be

directed first to those great objects, which the young should distinctly and constantly propose to themselves, as the glorious achievements, for which, by the energy, the freshness, the enthusiasm of their age, they are so peculiarly qualified. We consider,

I. *The noblest objects of youthful desire and pursuit.*

1. *Personal improvement.* I mean by this, that every young man should aim to become as truly good and excellent as he can be. I speak not now of his becoming great. That we shall consider presently. It is painful to discover, how few of the young men of Christian countries take a sufficiently elevated view of themselves, as endowed with the noblest, though perverted, creature-powers. One looks upon himself in no higher light, than as a mint for the coining of money. If he can learn the great art of accumulating property, he has reached the summit of human excellence. Multitudes are satisfied with the mere training of their muscular powers in some mechanical art, to the utter neglect of all the mighty powers of intellect, and of all the finer sentiments and affections

of the heart. It is painful to know, that every youth has a depraved heart, and still more so, to observe that so few have any desire to rectify the moral derangement, and to restore to the soul the sweet, harmonious, balanced exercise of its powers. Nay, some have even yielded themselves to the gratification of every depraved desire and feeling; restrained only by a regard to their reputation. They look upon the present life, not as probationary and disciplinary, and preparatory to a better; but as the golden time for the indulgence of all the lower propensities of the mind.

My proposal to the young before me is—that they look upon the immortal mind within, as their noblest possession; and upon the training of that, under the blessing of God, to piety and virtue, as their most important employment. It is that part of your nature, which places you but little below the angels. It is upon the proper employment of its powers, that your happiness here, and your blessedness hereafter, entirely depend. Your moral condition is a peculiarity in the history of God's empire. Angels, before you, have

fallen from their high estate ; but, unlike you, they have no mediator with God. They have no hope of pardon. Like you, they are perpetually disturbing and distracting the delicate harmony of their moral powers. But unlike you, they are under no dispensation of grace. No sweet, overwhelming views of the benignity and mercy of their offended Creator shines upon their dreary, despairing souls. While Memory incessantly portrays the scenes of former glory and happiness, the finger of Hope never points them to eminences of bliss, and personal perfection, which may be attained. To you, young friends ! to you all this pertains. There is a provision in the mercy of God, not only for the pardon of the penitent, but also for the ensuring of success “to them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality.” Who, that has once conceived aught of the primitive condition of man, or of angelic purity, does not see, that the world within him has lost its balancing power ? Disorder and discord have usurped the place of order and harmony. God was once the centre of all the social

system, and love its attractive power. Then the created soul moved in its own sphere, in harmony with the universe. Then God was its light and its life. But now the centripetal power of love is lost from the soul, and its centrifugal energies are driving the poor wandering star into the "blackness of darkness" eternal. God is no longer its centre. And hence, where once were verdant bloomings, the cold and barrenness of polar regions are seen and felt. Where the love of God exists not, there must be confusion, corruption, and death. Where self is the centre of attraction, the primitive order is destroyed, and what should have produced life and blessedness, must result in misery and death.

Who, that knows himself, can refuse the application to himself of these remarks? Who can say—"I am right;—I am clean;—I am prepared without change to stand before the throne of God;—this delicate machinery has never been disturbed, its balance-wheel never failed?" Man's moral depravity consists in his perverted affections, and in the voluntary blindness of his conscience, and the feebleness of its directing power. The con-

science was given to show us, when and how far our desires and affections may be properly gratified. We are supremely selfish, when all our choices, purposes, and actions tend only to our own gratification. We are ungodly, when our affections rest supremely on the creatures of God. Both these conditions of the mind and enlightened conscience would check and reprove. But where it does not, there it is blind, and voluntarily blind, because God has thrown around us light sufficient to guide our steps. The conscience is feeble, when, with what light we do possess, it cannot restrain the selfish desires, and the idolatrous affections, from controlling the conduct, and forming the character.

This description embraces two great classes. It includes, first the creature of passion. When he does any thing, it is because he feels a strong impulse to do it; consequently that which ought to stand eagle-eyed between the will, and every impulse excited by external objects, is either blind, or dumb and powerless. It either sees no wrong, or is weary of speaking the language of remonstrance, or it is no longer the balancing power, deter-

mining which impulse shall prevail, and which shall not.

This description includes also the man of earthly affections. He may be benevolent, and just, and true to man, because these are either, to a certain extent, constitutional propensities, like hunger and thirst, or are adopted as adapted to promote temporal happiness. He cannot see that he is selfish ; for he is kind, upright, and faithful. But he may easily see that he is ungodly ; by which is meant, that his affections embrace not God. He is just, but not towards the Creator, whom he thus defrauds of his affections and of all his powers ; affectionate, but not towards God ; grateful, but not to the Man of Calvary,—the God incarnate. This is moral derangement, and it must be rectified. It should be commenced immediately, under the gracious influence of that Spirit, who now comes forth from the mediatorial Prince of Life, to raise and restore ruined man. The affections must embrace God supremely in their wide scope. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, mind and strength.” To him we must be reconciled in Christ, and of

him obtain forgiveness. Conscience must become the director of actions and volitions, under the guidance of the Spirit and the word of Christ. Those pernicious habits of sensuality, which may have formed—those habits of self-will, which all have formed,—those habits of speaking and acting from passion, impulse, or desire, regardless of the moral right or wrong, must all be changed. From the pride, which originates in selfishness, and is sustained by moral blindness, you must come to a perpetual abiding in that holy and glorious presence which bows to heaven's pavement the tallest angels. From all that groveling absorption in the things of a probationary state, which were meant, not for the perfection of the soul in love, but for its discipline in penitence, and humility, and self-government, you must set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. In a word, you must undertake the training of a blessed spirit for the society and bliss of those, who “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” We propose,

2. *The Work of Philanthropy*;—doing of

good to the extent of your power. Who is the greatest man that ever lived? I speak of any that may be, or that was designed, in the Providence of God, to be a model for the race. It is blasphemy to rank, in true moral greatness,—that greatness which is the legitimate object of human ambition,—any above Jesus of Nazareth. Say not that he is too far removed to be our model. As a man, he was but a man, a perfect man, made in the likeness of sinful flesh; and the direction to us is,—“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” True greatness, as exhibited by him, is to live, and consecrate the time and powers to higher objects than such as men generally pursue; and, in the pursuit of those objects, to pass by the indulgence of the desires and feelings which constitute the happiness of most men. It was a fine specimen of the moral sublime, when Jesus sat weary and hungry at the well of Jacob, and said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.” It was spoken, in view of the ignorant and perishing souls then flocking to him from the city. It should never have been, for one moment, a

question with any human being, whether or not there is, truly, any greater object for which we can live, than that for which he lived. The only point, which it might have seemed presumption to believe, is, that we are permitted to engage in the same lofty enterprise; that it is not enough for heaven's mercy to call us to pardon, and peace, and the hope of heaven; but even to the very work, which tasked all the human energies of the Redeemer, and which illustrated all his Divine perfections. Yes, my young friends! you are called to become philanthropists. The sound of the trumpet is heard on high,—‘To arms! To arms!’—but it comes from the Captain of Salvation, the Prince of Peace. It is to a bloodless field—to contend “not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.” The rider on the “White Horse” goes not forth *alone* against the enemies of God and man. The victors, who are yet to walk in the triumphal procession, with palm leaves in their hands, are “the *dwellers on the earth* ;” some, doubtless, of them before me. Their weapons are the weapons of light,

wielded in the cause of God and humanity. But what are the objects of this moral warfare? They are—to deliver the prey from the spoiler, to burst open the prison doors, and to proclaim liberty to the captives. You are called to sigh and weep in the spirit of a Howard—nay, the spirit of Howard's Saviour—over the degradation, and wide-spread misery of a race which has apostatized from God, in its affections, and its allegiance.

We propose to you to become great men in the sight of God, of angels, and of the good on earth. And, if we have observed aright, it is hastening to this,—that the standard of greatness is undergoing a change; that to be a great man, in the estimation even of the world, will require, that he, to whom the distinction is awarded, shall exercise the moral and benevolent feelings, and not the selfish feelings, as his great impelling power; that his theatre shall be the scenes of actual wretchedness and moral degradation; that in his track shall be found the ignorant enlightened, the captive exulting in his freedom, the heart of the orphan gladdened, the cause of justice and truth established, the

glory of God promoted. Oh ! if you desire fame, let it be the fame of leaving the human family better and happier than you found it ; if your ear must drink in praise, let it be the blessing of him that was ready to perish ; let your monuments be the rich garden spots of moral beauty and fruitfulness, reclaimed from the waste wilderness. Help to increase the facilities for educating the mind of man—to improve the modes of educating—to spread these facilities, till they have benefited every member of the vast brotherhood of man. Let your party in politics be the great party whose aim is to have all men, under every government and any administration, govern themselves by the laws of God. Let every moral reformation receive from your hand and impulse and a happy guidance, which, but for you, it would never have received. Lift, on these shores of the great ocean of life, more of these moral light-houses, which shall save from temporal and eternal destruction the souls of men. Let a light be kindled, that shall continue to burn when you are dead. If it is the light of truth, others will tend it, and

trim it, and feed it. It will continue to burn with increasing strength and clearness, scattering from a wider and yet wider region the midnight darkness ; enlightening and cheering man on his way to eternity, even to the day, when the sun shall be blotted out ; and then it will still burn and mingle its rays with the glories of the celestial city. Young men ! I speak to you, because all this glory may be yours. Yes, under the merciful administration of Jesus Christ, you may become both good and great.

But, if we should succeed to stir up any strong desires in your mind, let us not leave you deceived by a false inference, that all this is reached by an impulse, a wish, and a resolution. To attain the high character of a practical, efficient philanthropist, requires much personal cultivation, much well-digested knowledge and experience ; and that these should be but qualifications, not substitutes, for activity. And, with the greater part, these attainments are to be the reward of efforts almost unaided by man. One child in ten thousand is blessed with a happy education. A mother, or, as by a miracle, some

competent substitute, has watched over the first developement and expansion of the powers. The understanding has been rightly disciplined and well-informed; the exuberant feelings have been chastened; the finer sensibilities cultivated; the soul formed to manliness, to piety, and practical wisdom. Oh! these instances are rare. Most of the good, who have adorned the world, and of the truly great, who have blessed it, have, under heaven's favour, made *themselves*. They have grappled with the evil habits of youth; they have struggled against the influence of evil companions, and of a depraved public sentiment; they have feared, and wept, and prayed, and studied under discouragements, which, contemplated in the mass, would have appalled them. All this we know. And yet, with all this in view, we urge you to become good and great men. This will require you to become truly pious men. This is the first element of true greatness; because it is the only state in which the moral powers are rightly exercised. Sin is the only truly despicable object in the sight of God. And piety is its antagonist and opposite principle.

All other greatness only removes you the farther from God's esteem, and the respect of angels. It only lifts you higher, that you may sink the deeper in eternal disgrace. Shun that false and phantom-greatness which lures you to eternal ruin. He is not a great man, who depends on any thing physical, or any thing external for his greatness. Greatness is not in reputation, but in character. He is not truly great, who does not meet the obligations, which arise from all his relations, and chiefly those to God. That is not greatness, which will not make one illustrious at the judgment day, and respected in heaven. He is not a great man, who does not enjoy the blessing of God. Moses was truly great. Select one exhibition of it. When the cloud of God's wrath was gathered over the guilty children of Israel, it was not learning, nor military talents, nor political sagacity, that could save them; it was prayer. This is power, and Moses possessed it. This is greatness, and Moses possessed it.

Young men! become men of prayer. The eternal and wise God changed the name of Jacob to that of Prince of God. Why? Be-

cause he had native mental power, or great intellectual acquirements? No; but because he had power with man, and power to prevail with God in prayer. Ah! that is the highest style of eloquence, which persuades God. Get it, young men! in the school of Christ: get it, as patriots, for your country's sake; get it, as reformers of a sinful world. It is idle, to look or labour for the renovation of the frame-work of society, unless you renovate the hearts of men; and it is vain to hope for that, without the aid of God's Holy Spirit. And his influences will be sent upon others, in answer to our prayers. Be men of prayer. It is the best attainment of a patriot, and of a philanthropist. And to attempt the radical renovation of society, independently of the agency of God's Spirit, which he has promised to give in answer to prayer, is moral quackery.

To be useful requires *a cultivated mind*. This consists in two things;—the proper discipline of the mental faculties, and a knowledge of man, of the physical world which surrounds him, and of the God in whom he lives and moves. To be an efficient philan-

thropist you must be possessed of a well-cultivated mind. We propose no royal road to this eminence. The men, who have reached it, have toiled and fainted, and again toiled, and again been discouraged. They, that reap in great joy, and bear home their sheaves with shouting from this field, are they, who carried forth their precious seed and scattered it with tears. Yes, the great Philanthropist himself was not exempt from this universal law. Gethsemane and Calvary lifted their terrific barriers between him and the end of his labours. To be philanthropists you must become students. No branch of knowledge will be out of place, while some will be more important than others. Neither the time nor the occasion allow an enumeration of those processes of mental discipline, and those branches of knowledge, which you may profitably pursue for this great purpose. It may suffice to say that the intellectual faculties which you should train, and the habits which you should form, are—reflection—attention—arrangement of facts under principles—activity—judgment. If I should recommend any books to those who wish to com-

mence, they would be Dr. Abercrombie's two little works on the intellectual and moral faculties.

But, besides mental strength and correct intellectual and moral habits, you must be acquainted with facts and principles.

God is the first great object of knowledge. You are his and in his world. Apostacy from him is man's misery—reconciliation to him the only happiness. The Bible is therefore the first book in a human library; because, on each of these points, it throws a light which no other can furnish. There never was, in modern days, a great efficient public philanthropist, who achieved much for the moral renovation of mankind, whose principles were not formed by the Bible.

As you are to operate upon man, you cannot know him too intimately. Your sources of knowledge are the Bible, Observation, Introspection, and History.

Physical science should be one branch of your studies. We recommend a cultivated taste:—the habit of writing, speaking, and conversing properly and impressively. You should obtain right views of the object of

our position in this world, and of the true value of time, property, and every other means of influence.

It requires, finally, a well-blanced mind. By which is meant, one that is neither indolent, nor idly active, nor injuriously active ;—one that is neither insensible to the sufferings of man, nor so sensitive as to be unfitted for action, nor yet driven to act blindly and injudiciously ;—one that is not wavering on great practical principles, nor yet rash in forming a judgment and obstinate in maintaining it ; but one that looks calmly at a subject on every side, under a solemn sense of responsibility to posterity and to God, and then dares to believe what is true, and to proclaim it on every suitable occasion ;—one that is willing to hear counsel, to profit by advice, and yet fearless of personal consequences, if the cause of truth and human happiness requires sacrifice. We may not now illustrate each of these ; but we may take one and expand it a little. That independence, which you must acquire, in order that you may become an efficient benefactor to your race, has been impressively exhibited

by many, who have gone before you in this noble career. That the condition of the human race is improving, on the whole, is evident. There is an advance in parts of the world, in science, and in the arts which make matter subservient to mind, in morals, in religious science, in jurisprudence, and in the international law. For all these advances, we are indebted to the divine mercy. But the instruments, which God was pleased to employ, were men, who had by much cultivation become fitted for their sphere, and then, with singular firmness and independence, moved forward in the work of reformation.

Polytheism was the national, the court-religion of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Persia. Some bold spirits must have dared to investigate, whether public sentiment was right on this point. And, after investigating, something more was required. There must have been a wise selection of the modes of publishing the truth, and of opposing the popular error. Yes, and there must have been an utter abandonment of the public favour, an exposure even of life, which none but an elevated mind will considerately incur, in view

of a great object of public welfare. Need I mention, as high on this list, Isaiah, the sublime reprover of idolatry, and all the prophets of the Old Testament, who were stoned, burned, and sawn asunder? To them and to their firmness are we indebted for our conceptions of the unity of God, and of the infinite majesty and glory of his name.

Judaism was the state-religion which opposed the introduction of Christianity. We inherit the latter as our richest legacy; but it cost other blood besides that of its great Author. Read the lives of the first preachers and professors, for an illustration of that decision and independence, which is demanded of the benefactors of our race. To whom are we indebted for the benefits of the Reformation; and to what traits in the characters of the Reformers?

You might find even in the history of physical science specimens of the same. Such was Copernicus, whose knowledge and boldness called the wrath of the inquisitorial fathers upon him.

We have thus urged you, not merely to become great men, but,—that which needs

a more powerful stimulus,—to go through the severe process of preparation for it. Were we thus to urge little children, our argument and appeal would fail alike of being understood and felt. And so with men in the maturity of life, fixed in the inflexibility of their intellectual and moral habits. But I have spoken “unto you, young men! because ye are strong.” And it now remains, after this exhibition of the great objects, to which your mental strength must be directed, to observe,

II. That Youth is the period of life in which the pursuit of these objects must be commenced.

1. *Youth has its peculiar advantages for the formation of character.* The periods of human life may be variously divided for various purposes. The body runs through the seasons of helplessness and sprightliness, vigour and decrepitude. The intellect has sometimes two periods, generally three. The mind is at first shut up; it then expands; and, if neglected, it runs back again to imbecility. But, if rightly treated, the mind would lift its pinions, with growing strength, until the moral coil is dropped. Except in cases of disease, its vigour would

remain unimpaired, if not neglected. In respect, therefore, to intellectual improvement, youth is the important time of forming those habits, which cannot afterwards be formed, when the active duties of life rush upon man to the extent of a total absorption of time and thought.

But this sentiment is most emphatically true, as we observe the peculiarity of man's moral structure. With regard to character, infancy is the period of mental torpor. Then comes the season of childhood, when propensities are first developed ; when the imitative power is brought into exercise, but the conscience is feeble, and its discernment of right and wrong exceedingly limited. Now the habits of animal indulgence are formed, without scarcely an understanding that man must live for higher ends. Now the habits of lying, fraud, pilfering, meanness, are formed, with scarcely a whisper from the inward monitor, and with almost no conception of a holy and all-seeing Judge, and a future retribution. Such, as matters of facts, are the disadvantages, under which man commences the formation of character ; even at the

very period when the lowest propensities have the strongest play, and when his own moral checks are the feeblest. Not that children have no conscience. Not that they are incapable of feeling the generous impulses of gratitude and sympathy. But this is emphatically the period, when they must be governed and instructed by others. The plastic hand of education must now do for them what nature has not done, and what they cannot do for themselves. But we pass from childhood to the third stage of man's moral history. Here he appears with his propensities to animal gratification—the strongest mental bias; his imagination the wildest, and yet most commanding intellectual faculty. But with all this, he has some experience of the evils of transgression; the sense of right and wrong has become formed. He is now capable of choosing his gratifications, in view of all the relations he sustains to God and man in time and eternity, of his obligations, and of the consequences to himself and others. The appetites and passions are strong; but they have not the fearful strength of habit long-matured. Evil examples are

powerful. But conscience, as it were new-born, is vigorous and powerful too. Resolution is a power, which has not yet been overcome, and it lives enwrapped in its giant strength within the youthful bosom. The sense of shame is a powerful barrier against vice. The finer feelings of the heart, not yet rendered callous, plead against it. Here is the interesting period of youth. The child was the creature of impulse, of sympathy, of imitation, of stubbornness perhaps, but not of decision. This has exceptions; yet it is generally true. But now appears the youth on the stage of probation, ushered amid scenes and companions, whose moral bearings he just begins to comprehend. To him the task is committed, to form in a few short years the character of one man for life, and deeply to affect the destinies of a multitude more. That season passes. He goes on from the age of twenty-five to that of thirty years; and it is generally then determined what character he will bear through life, and in what sphere of moral influence he will move. If he has yielded to sensual desires, to meanness, to fraud, sordid gratification; if he has

stooped from the lofty aspirings after holiness and immortal glory from the hands of his Redeemer ; he has become weak in the chains of a self-imposed slavery. And every fitful struggle only proves their iron-strength. It was evidently this moral strength to which the Apostle alluded, for he says,—“ Ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one.” Here was the proof of their strength ; that with the moral energy, imparted by grace, they had overcome the great enemy, in whom is concentrated all moral evil. Young men ! ye are strong to effect this great object committed to man,—the formation of character ;—strong to grapple with moral and spiritual foes, that shoot with the arrows of contempt, or the deadlier weapons of flattery ; that decoy where they cannot beat down.

2. *Youth is the most favourable season to commence the preparation for a life of elevated philanthropy.*

Imagine this entire assembly to be aroused by the Spirit of God, in view of the importance of this subject, to an intense desire to commence the formation of those habits, and the acquisition of those attainments, which

should fit them to become extensively the benefactors of the world. The desire might burn like an inward fire. But what will it avail yonder aged man? He may sigh over the mistakes and moral blindness of his youth, over time and faculties wasted, over a life almost spent, and its greatest object left unaccomplished. It may prostrate his soul in penitence and contrition before God. And he may say, with soul-thrilling eloquence,—“Young men! *ye, ye* are strong: but with me it is too late. Yours is the fire, and fervor, and force;—yours, the facility for forming new habits, which mark you as the favored objects of these appeals. My summer is past, my harvest is ended.”

Yours, young men! is more than this; your very position in society is that of strength. The wicked one is contending for the mastery with the Prince of Peace. The embattled hosts are on the field. The cruel rigiments of Infidelity, Intemperance, Gambling, Licentiousness, are all, under their great leader, pressing their terrific conquests over human virtue and happiness. But it is with the young men of this generation to de-

termine the condition of the war to the end of time. Your individual character and influence could do much. But what could not your united influence accomplish? Let the young men desert the standards of Infidelity, Intemperance, Gambling, Profaneness, Sabbath-desecration, and Uncleaness; and who will lift their banners of blood again, when the old drunkards and debauchees, and gospel-despisers have passed away? Yours is the strength to be beat down, in the present generation, the enemies of God and man, and to keep them low in, at least the next. Yours it might be to train, under yet better auspices, a still more efficient army for the Prince Immanuel. And although the little band, here collected, cannot do what belongs to the entire body of youth, yet the work must at some time begin somewhere, that every word, which the Lord hath spoken, may be established.

But, methinks, I hear the tones of despondency;—"The speaker forgets his commission; many, with whom and for whom he came to plead, enjoy but limited opportunities for mental cultivation. But here is a

path stricken out, which requires all the time and all the opportunities afforded by a liberal education. He has surely forgotten the merchant's and mechanic's apprentice ?"—No, young man ! I have spoken thus even unto you ; because, with all the disadvantages of your situation for mental cultivation, you are strong. And, to strike a decisive blow at your discouragements, I would lay down the broad position, that there is no situation or employment, in which it is proper for a young man to be, in which he may not become a good and a great man. You must breathe-in the gospel-principle, that it is neither family, nor property, nor profession, which forms real character, merit, or respectability. Look not for honour to your profession, but to your character. With regard to the formation of a religious and moral character, surely you can complain of no special disadvantages. It is, then, the intellectual part of the training for which you think you have not time and opportunity. I admit that there are four particulars in which the liberally-educated has the advantage.

1. *In the amount of time which he can de-*

vote to mental improvement. And yet there are some compensating circumstances, which you, perhaps, overlook. It is demonstrated beyond dispute from physiological science and observation, that muscular exercise, such as agreeably employs the mind, is indispensable to the best cultivation of the entire man. Some of the first young men of America have utterly disqualified themselves for usefulness, by a disproportioned exercise of the mind. And besides, if you are truly aroused to take firm hold on this great enterprise of self-improvement, the probability is, that those hours, which you can devote to it, will be so much more profitably spent, that you will accomplish more real study, than is done by the majority of college-students.

It is not the enrolment on the catalogue of a university, nor the residence within college-walls, nor the listening to professors' lectures, that makes the man. It depends, at last, on his own efforts, how much he is benefited. If, with a faithful attention to those interests of your employer with which you are intrusted, and due attention to the particular branch of business which you are learning,

there are combined the habits of scrupulously saving time, of guarding the mind against every thing which interferes with its improvement, of conquering difficulties, of persevering in the midst of discouragements, and of still keeping the eye on a high mark, when all the circumstances in which you are placed are depressing ; you have a moral training for philanthropic effort that is invaluable. You complain of the want of time. Where did Benjamin Franklin find it to form in his printing-office the philosopher and statesman ? Had we more Franklins in the shops, we should have more in the senate-chamber. The living names of great and good men, who have surmounted the same difficulties, are very numerous. Economy of time and system would accomplish for you what might now seem wonders.

Another of your disadvantages is,

2. *The want of that collision of mind, which Schools and Colleges afford.* This is a real difficulty, and we will not look to you to remove it ; but, I trust, the day is not far distant, when your fellow-citizens will see this subject in a true light, and assist you in the

formation of such Societies for discussion and composition, as will greatly advance the development of your mental powers. And yet, to show you what can be done among yourselves, with a little assistance from others, I refer you to the account of the Gas-Light Company of Glasgow, as stated in the Penny Magazine, vol xi, p. 60, American edition.

3. You are in want of *Professors or Teachers*. I can only say now,—bend down, dear youth ! with all the energies of your soul, to intellectual and moral improvement ; we will hail your advances, and welcome you as brothers. We will do more. I can almost pledge this community to furnish you with lectures, and with courses of instruction. Your evenings may be divided between the public worship of your God, private study, and the public lecture. You shall have higher attractions than the theatre, ball-room, or gambling-house can offer.

4. And the remaining difficulty is *the want of books*. Is that so ? In this community are there youthful minds, panting for knowledge, who cannot reach its precious fountain ; and this, for the want of a little of the property,

which God has so liberally bestowed upon us? No, young friends! this will not be the case long, after this community shall have learned your necessities. Your cause is strong. It is the plea of want, laid at the heart of patriotism and benevolence. It is not a cry for bread. It is the mind, struggling through the mists of mental night, panting for light, thirsting for the living waters of knowledge. Not many words are needed in presenting your claim before this Christian community. They feel for you, for their country, for posterity, for the honour of their city. It shall not be said, that the claim of an Institution, formed for your intellectual and moral improvement, was presented in vain.

In closing my remarks, I turn again to you, young men! I have presented but one side of the subject. You are strong not only for good, but also for evil. You are strong constitutionally. But the greater your strength the more critical your situation. Your vigour is but like steam in navigation, the impelling power; it is not the helm. If you abandon yourself to blind impulse, remember that life's stream is winding; remember,

how thickly it is underlaid with rocks and shoals. In coming up the Thames, they do not trust even an experienced master, but must employ a pilot who has studied every inch of the river. And dare you venture on the stream of time, without an enlightened conscience for your pilot? If your helm be not vigilantly and strongly commanded by this only skilful, faithful guide, you must inevitably be wrecked. You are strong to undermine the pillars of social order. You may live yet many years, doing the work of death.

There are two parties in morals in this community : on the one side, are engaged the friends of public virtue and true religion ; on the other, the sustainers of vice, of infidelity, of intemperance, and of all forms of evil. Where shall your strength be enlisted? If with Virtue and Godliness, let it be actively, efficiently employed. Who dares devote the peculiar strength of youth to selfish purposes of any kind? When you may without extravagance hope to become public benefactors, is it right to bury your powers? How can you determine, in becoming a law-

yer, physician, mechanic, or merchant, to live for yourself? Are there not motives sufficiently powerful to induce you to live for the good of your race? See how it is sunk in ignorance, in oppression, in sin. You may help to elevate it. Yes, you may help to purify and elevate the character of this whole empire, and make its influence yet more powerful and beneficial to the entire world.

You live in a day of peculiar promise to the human race. There is a waking up of the human mind from the slumber of ages, and a startling of the human conscience from its long torpor. An intense curiosity and earnest anxiety for the word of God, are now heaving the mass of the pagan mind. The heathen are calling to the sons of Britain and America, to become cordial believers in that Gospel, which they so richly enjoy to enlist as Missionaries, and to herald its joyful tidings to their waiting crowds. They call upon our educated youth, to enlist all their genius and learning in order to illustrate the science of God and salvation. They call upon our mechanics, to educate themselves to go forth as the pioneers of the arts,

which have flowed in the wake of Christianity. And did one poor fanatic, emerging from his murky cell, once rouse the chivalry of Europe to pour its wealth, its talent, its nobility, its royalty, down upon the infidel Turk, to liberate the holy sepulchre from pollution? And have not we a nobler order of mind to address and move?—have not we a holier crusade to commend? Did kings throw away their sceptres, and grasp the sword to carry war, and devastation, and death, amidst innocent thousands, merely to gratify a sentiment of superstition? And will not our youth be ready even to forsake their firesides, in the holier, nobler work, of bowing the heart of man to the sceptre of Christ? Look at the minute steps in this great work. The preacher, schoolmaster, physician, farmer, mechanic, must go and lead their benighted minds to Christ; must carry them the press, educate their children, form new habits, and reorganize the structure of domestic society.

Now all this range of thought strikes us with peculiar force, when we remember, that there are no impediments to personal

improvement, but such as indolence presents. Merit, in every civilized country, affords an acknowledged claim to public confidence, and to extensive influence. To do good requires no genealogical table, no great family-name. Young men! we know not how to cease our importunity. Will you commence, or pursue with renewed vigour, the course of self-improvement for philanthropic purposes? We want you to become truly strong men, in knowledge, in intellectual power, in moral energy. We want you, not to be authors of ephemeral excitements in our excitable world, but to impress deeply on the human mind the eternal principles of moral and religious truth. Take the Redeemer of men for your model. Study deeply and prayerfully his character, until you breathe his spirit. Read the biography of good and great men. Take as a model of judicious perseverance, Granville Sharp. Under what one has called,—“the excitement of mercy,”—he was led to protect a slave from Barbadoes, named Jonathan Strong, who was brought to England by his master, and becoming sick, was left to perish in the streets. After he had recover-

ed, under the kind attentions of a brother of Sharp, his master claimed him as his slave. This aroused the noble soul, that could feel another's woes as keenly as his own. Sharp immediately applied himself to a new study. And if every man, who studies law, would do it as he did,—to become an able philanthropist,—that profession might exert an influence for good, which cannot be calculated. He examined the principles of the British constitution and law, to see whether they really stood opposed to liberty and the rights of man, or not. The decisions of all the highest courts were against him. Here then he determined to take his stand, with no other weapon than truth. He opposed the ablest and profoundest jurist England ever saw; and he maintained that opposition, until he overthrew the influence of authoritative, but unjust opinion, and finally established the glorious truth, that, by the British constitution, every human being, that treads on British soil, is free. Two long years he spent, not in vapering, and denouncing, and frothy declamation, but in an intense study of law. He then consulted the

most eminent jurists, and wrote several tracts to enlighten the public mind, and prepare the way for his attack. After the case of Strong was decided in favour of the master, three other cases were tried, each one of which opened the way for Sharp to shake the prejudices, which, like spiders, hung their dusty cobweb-folds even in such a king's palace as the mind of Mansfield. This great man at last yielded to Sharp's resistless argument, and came out and settled the principle for ever. Trace this history through, to admire and imitate his motives, his persevering and painful study. Be benefactors of your race; be deep, profound thinkers. See the array of public sentiment against him; and see the triumph of principle. Behold its effects now in the West Indies and in America. The first of August stands closely connected, not in time, but as effect to cause, with the efforts of that noble mind.

Fellow Christians! I take this occasion to commend to you the interests of the **BRITISH AND FOREIGN YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY**. Its objects are worthy your ardent affection. They are comprehended in the improvement of

youthful hearts and minds. Anticipate what they may be. Perhaps to-night a strong desire for self-improvement is aroused, but, without your aid, aroused in vain. To what nobler object can you devote hundreds of pounds than to feed those minds, and train these patriots and philanthropists?

Active Christian Benevolence the Source of Sublime and Lasting Happiness. — CARLOS WILCOX.

WOULDST thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart opprest with woes untold?
Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief?
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold. —
'Tis when the rose is wrapt in many a fold
Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty; not when, all unrolled,
Leaf after leaf, its bosom, rich and fair,
Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air.

Wake, thou that sleepest in enchanted bowers,
Lest these lost years should haunt thee on the night
When death is waiting for thy numbered hours
To take their swift and everlasting flight;
Wake, ere the earth-born charm unnerve thee quite,
And be thy thoughts to work divine addressed;
Do something — do it soon — with all thy might;
An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
And God himself, inactive, were no longer blest.

Some high or humble enterprise of good
Contemplate, till it shall possess thy mind,
Become thy study, pastime, rest, and food,
And kindle in thy heart a flame refined.
Pray Heaven for firmness thy whole soul to bind
To this thy purpose — to begin, pursue,
With thoughts all fixed, and feelings purely kind;
Strength to complete, and with delight review,
And grace to give the praise where all is ever due.

No good of worth sublime will Heaven permit
To light on man as from the passing air;
The lamp of genius, though by nature lit,
If not protected, pruned, and fed with care,
Soon dies, or runs to waste with fitful glare;
And learning is a plant that spreads and towers
Slow as Columbia's aloes, proudly rare,
That, 'mid gay thousands, with the suns and showers
Of half a century, grows alone before it flowers.

Has immortality of name been given
To them that idly worship hills and groves,
And burn sweet incense to the queen of heaven?
Did Newton learn from fancy, as it roves,
To measure worlds, and follow where each moves?
Did Howard gain renown that shall not cease,
By wanderings wild that nature's pilgrim loves?
Or did Paul gain Heaven's glory and its peace,
By musing o'er the bright and tranquil Isles of Greece?

Beware lest thou, from sloth, that would appear
But lowliness of mind, with joy proclaim
Thy want of worth; a charge thou couldst not hear
From other lips, without a blush of shame,

Or pride indignant ; then be thine the blame,
And make thyself of worth ; and thus enlist
The smiles of all the good, the dear to fame ;
'Tis infamy to die and not be missed,
Or let all soon forget that thou didst e'er exist.

Rouse to some work of high and holy love,
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know, —
Shalt blest the earth while in the world above ;
The good begun by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow ;
The seed that, in these few and fleeting hours,
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine in Heaven's immortal bowers.

THE PLEASANTNESS
OF
EARLY PIETY.

THE PLEASANTNESS

OF

EARLY PIETY.

I. IT is the common delusion of the world, that religion is a melancholy thing; unsuitable to the young and sprightly; and of such a nature that it would blast all their pleasures, and render their lives dark and dreary. The word of God, on the other hand, describes true religion as the only source of real comfort. It is the only remains of Paradise below. That holy Book declares, that “the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace.” It also tells us of “joy and peace in believing;” of “rejoicing in God;” “rejoicing in the Lord always;” of “rejoicing” in Christ, “with joy unspeakable and full of glory;” of “delighting” in “the Lord.” The scriptures represent it as the Christian’s portion to possess “a peace which passeth all under-

standing;" "if sorrowful," to be "always rejoicing;" to "glory even in tribulation;" and even if "the fig-tree should not blossom, and there should be no fruit in the vine;" if the "labour of the olive should fail, and the fields should yield no meat;" if the "flocks should be cut off from the fold, and there should be no herd in the stall;" if, in short, famine and desolation were ravaging all around, still to "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation."

II. If, after this, you wish for human testimonies, to the comforts which true piety affords, you may have them in abundance. Not that you should ask the men of the world. This would be as absurd as to request a man born blind, to describe the beauties of a fine prospect. As he, who never saw, cannot tell what pleasures sight affords; as he who never heard, cannot describe the delights which music yields its admirers; no more can they, who never knew religion, tell you what its pleasures are. But would you know whether religion is the best source of happiness, ask those who possess it in reality. How many such would tell you, they never knew what

true delight was, till they found it in religion! How many such would unite their testimony with that of a young person, known to the writer, on the evening after her solemn admission into the Church of Christ, "This has been a happy day to me; I hope I shall be faithful unto death, and then my last will be a happier?"

III. True religion, though it forbids conformity to this world, and directs you to set your affections on the things above, yet forbids no lawful use of the innocent comforts of earth and time. It is true, it denies you the play-house, that hot-bed of vice, the licentious romance, the silly novel, and those scenes of worldly revelry, which a poor deceived world call happiness; yet these are not sources of real happiness, even to those who love them so well. On one occasion, when some of Colonel Gardiner's dissolute companions were congratulating him on his happiness in licentious dissipation, a dog happened to come into the room, and he could not forbear groaning inwardly, and saying to himself, "O that I were that dog!" Such was his happiness, and such is doubtless that of thousands more.

Early piety would give you the best pleasures. Through the knowledge of Jesus you would have peace. Peace within. Conscience, that else must be a troublesome monitor, would become a delightful friend; while the Holy Spirit would witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. Peace with God is another source of true delight, and this too would be yours; you might look on the Most High as a tender Father, and beloved friend, while to the careless sinner he is a dreadful foe.

IV. Early piety would open to you another fountain of real pleasure, by forming your heart for the enjoyment of delights, far, far superior to those of sense. In communion with God, in meditation on divine promises and love, the Christian has those pleasures which he would not exchange for all the pleasures of the world. Even his tears of penitential grief afford him more sincere delight, than they find in all their noisy mirth. The public, as well as the private services of religion, also yield true delight to those, who, partaking of renewing grace, are capable of relishing the sacred pleasure. Hear how one who knew these pleasures, could express his feel-

ings, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name."

V. In various other respects the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness. Is it pleasing to think of dangers escaped? early religion would give you this satisfaction. You might, with wonder and delight, reflect that God had snatched you from perdition, and that though once an heir of wrath, the danger were over, and you an heir of heaven. Is it plea-

sant to think of treasures obtained and friends possessed? This pleasure would be yours. You might read the long catalogue of the Christian's blessings, and say of each, "This is mine. This promise is made to me." You might look upwards to the abodes of bliss, and exclaim, "There dwells the ever-blessed Jehovah, and he is my God. There is the adored Immanuel, and he is my Saviour. Those bright abodes, which lie far beyond the reach of mortal sight, are my future home. The stars that adorn that spangled firmament,

‘ Are glittering dust beneath the feet
Of those who dwell with God.’ ”

In health and prosperity you might say, "God gives me much here, but how much more have I hereafter; how much better are my treasures there!" Or in poverty, sickness, and pain, you might smile and say, "My all is not laid here." Sweet is it for a seaman, that has escaped the storm, fixed on a rock, to smile on the waves that are beating beneath; but O, it is far more sweet to smile at all the terrors of time, as vanquished enemies and baffled foes! Who should be so happy as they,

who have a humble confidence that eternal happiness is theirs? Who should enjoy such peace as they who can look at death without fear, and view it as the path that leads their souls to God, to Jesus, to heaven; to glory, endless as that of their Creator; and to happiness more real than sorrows are below! Who should possess such solid comforts, as they who can turn their eyes to the grave, and dread not the prospect of lying there; who can raise their thoughts to the starry heavens, and rapturously consider, that they shall outlive these glorious fires, and shine, adorned with brighter glories, when stars and sun shall shine no more! Who should be so happy as they, who can contemplate without dread, that solemn period, when the world shall burn; the trumpet sound; the Judge descend; the dead awake; and happiness or misery inexpressible, unchangeable, and eternal, become the lot of every human being! Go and look into an open grave, try to fancy it opened for you, and see whether you can imagine this with peace and composure. If you cannot, learn that all your delights do not make you happy, for into the dreaded grave

you must ere long descend ; and thousands possessed of the blessings of humble piety, have trodden that gloomy path with satisfaction ; and desired to depart and be with Christ.

Is it pleasant thus to look forward, with sweet anticipation, to future scenes of happiness ? This source of pleasure would become yours, if a possessor of early piety. Is it pleasant to have a friend ready to welcome us when a long journey is ended ? Jesus is the young Christian's friend, he waits on the distant shore of heaven. In their passage through the river of death he will uphold his humble friends ; and welcome them to glory on their arrival there. The Christian too, indulges the pleasing hope of reunion there, with the pious friends he has loved below. He can contemplate the happy bands above. Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and numbers to the world unknown, who have loved the Lord, and won the promised crown ; and among them he perhaps enumerates some, once dear, still dear to himself, who have finished their pilgrimage, and whom he hopes to meet again, when he shall finish his. O happy meeting ! O blissful prospect ! Would not you possess it ? and

when you reach the close of life, do not you desire the pleasure of panting for the skies? the pleasure of being able to appeal to the Lord, that you have humbly loved him? Do you not wish to say at last, "Gracious Redeemer, on thee I rest my hopes; my best obedience has been too imperfect; my most faithful duties stained with too much imperfection; my love too cold; my thankfulness too weak; yet I expect eternal life, for it was purchased for me by thy blood? I look to heaven; it was secured for me by thy merits, thy sufferings, and thy death. Gracious Lord, thine be the honour, while the infinite advantage is mine. It yields me pleasure now to know, that thou seest that I love thee; and have loved thee, from my early days. Thou hast seen me truly thine, imperfect as I am; and though I have often offended thee, yet I bless thy name, that I have been kept from dishonouring thee, by those numerous and dark crimes, which I should have committed if I had not remembered thee betimes. Though I have not done my duty, and am an unprofitable servant, so short of thy claims have been the services of my youth, and those of

my riper years ; yet I look forward with joyful hope to the time when I shall see thee as thou art ! and though my time is almost finished, yet I rejoice in the sweet prospect of passing eternity in thy presence, and there will I cast at thy feet that crown which I have in expectation, and which was bought with thy blood."

VI. True piety is pleasant, for it is a source of pleasure even in the midst of pain. Man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upwards ; and though many young persons seem to suppose that that world which has been a storm to others shall be a calm to them, yet experience soon removes the delusion. No situation on earth can give perfect peace. Even the most peaceful and happy dwellings, where love and harmony ever abide, cannot supply that blessing, for into them pain has its avenue, and death its entrance ; death, that dissolves the fondest ties, and takes away the life that is dearer than our own. But no affliction can befall the true Christian, under which his Redeemer will not give him suitable support and consolation. A gentleman was invited to visit an indigent man deeply afflicted ; and gave the

following account of what he witnessed : "On entering the cottage, I found him alone, his wife having gone to procure him milk from a kind neighbour. I was startled at the sight of a pale emaciated man, a living image of death, fastened upright in a chair, by a rude mechanism of cords and belts, hanging from the ceiling. He was totally unable to move either hand or foot, having *more than four years* been entirely deprived of the use of his limbs, yet the whole time suffering extreme anguish from swellings at all his joints. I asked, "Are you left alone, my friend, in this deplorable situation?" "No, sir," replied he, in a touchingly feeble tone of mild resignation, "*I am not alone, for God is with me.*" I asked him if he ever felt tempted to repine under the pressure of so long-continued and heavy a calamity? "Not for the last three years," said he, "blessed be God for it!" the eye of faith sparkling, and giving life to his pallid countenance, while he made the declaration; "for I have learned from this book in whom to believe; and though I am aware of my weakness and unworthiness, I am persuaded that he will not leave me nor forsake me.

And so it is, that when my lips are closed with locked-jaw, and I cannot speak to the glory of God, *he enables me to sing his praises in my heart.*"

VII. My young friend, are not such hopes, such prospects as have been mentioned, sources of real pleasure? If you are a follower of the world, what is there in all your vain delights, that can bear any comparison with that holy peace, that pure delight which flow from the love of God, and a hope full of immortality? If you yourself perceive no charms in these pleasures, ask those who have tried them, what support and delight they yield even in the last awful hours of life. Go to the sick bed of the humble believer, say, "Poor sufferer, can you find comfort in the midst of anguish?" "Yes," says one, "I have pain, but I have peace, I have peace."* "What, can you contemplate death itself with comfort?" "Yes," replies another, "I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another."† But they who made these declarations had reached advanced life.

* Baxter.

† Watts.

Go then to the sick bed of the dying youth ; ask him, " Can you feel any pleasure, while sickness blasts all the joyous prospects which the young possess, and threatens you with an early tomb ? " Let one reply, who being dead, yet speaks, " O, that I could but let you know what I now feel ! O, that I could show you what I see ! O, that I could express the thousandth part of that sweetness that I now find in Christ ! you would all then think it well worth while to make it your business to be religious. O, my dear friends, you little think what Christ is worth upon a death-bed. I would not, for a world, nay, for millions of worlds, be now without Christ and a pardon. I would not for a world live any longer : the very thought of a possibility of recovery makes me even tremble. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Death, do thy worst. Death hath lost its terribleness. Death, it is nothing. Death is nothing (through grace) to me. I can as easily die as shut my eyes ; or turn my head and sleep ; I long to be with Christ ; I long to die. O, that you did but see and feel what I do ! Come and behold a dying man more cheerful than you ever saw any

healthful man in the midst of his sweetest enjoyments. O, sirs, worldly pleasures are pitiful, poor, sorry things, compared with one glimpse of this glory, which shines so strongly into my soul ! O, why should any of you be so sad, when I am so glad ? This, this is the hour that I have waited for.”* Or now ask the pious young woman, who, while others of her age are flaunting away in vanity and folly, lies on the bed of pain and suffering. Say to her, “Is religion pleasant in your esteem ?” “Yes,” she might reply, “yes, I am very happy : I would not change situation with any one living. Do not weep for me : I have no wish to live ; if I might have life by wishing for it, I should rather choose to die, and go to my Redeemer.” “I long to go home.” “I am truly happy, and if this be dying, it is a pleasant thing to die.” “Not for all the world, not for a thousand worlds would I be restored to health.”* The purport of these expressions was actually uttered by two young ladies, neither of whom completed her sixteenth year. O happy they who learn

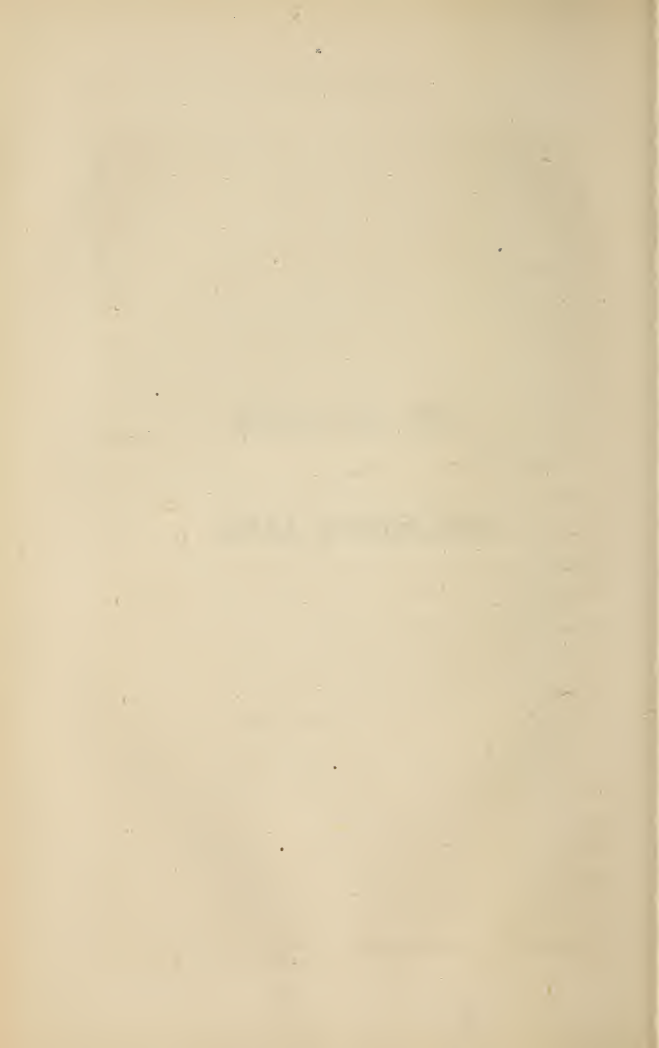
* Janeway.

† Eliza Cunningham and Eliza M——.

so soon, so well to die ! And could you follow these to the triumphant family above, and see that glory which no heart conceives, then might a heavenly voice say to you, "Hither lead the despised and neglected, but pleasant paths of early piety." My young friend, shall they lead you there ? Can you be truly happy in any other way ? Can you be happy too soon in this ? Seek happiness, then, at once ; O, seek it in the love of your Redeemer, and the favour of your God.

True happiness had no localities ;
No tones provincial—no peculiar garb.
Where duty went, she went—with justice went—
And went with meekness, charity, and love.
Where'er a tear was dried—a wounded heart
Bound up—a bruised spirit with the dew
Of sympathy anointed—or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed—or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven ;
Where'er an evil passion was subdued,
Or Virtue's feeble embers fanned ; where'er
A sin was heartily abjured, and left ;
Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed
A pious prayer, or wished a pious wish—
There was a high and holy place, a spot
Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.

THE PLEASURES
OF A
RELIGIOUS LIFE.



THE PLEASURES
OF
A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

A DESIRE after happiness is inseparable from the human mind. It is the natural and healthy craving of our spirit; an appetite which we have neither will nor power to destroy, and for which all mankind are busily employed in making provision. This is as natural as for birds to fly, or fishes to swim. For this the scholar and the philosopher, who think it consists in knowledge, pore over their books and their apparatus, light the midnight lamp, and keep frequent vigils, when the world around them is asleep. For this the warrior, who thinks that happiness is inseparably united with fame, pursues that bubble through the glory field of conflict, and is as lavish of his life, as if it were not worth a soldier's pay. The worldling, with whom happiness

and *wealth* are kindred terms, worships daily at the shrine of Mammon, and offers earnest prayers for the golden shower. The voluptuary gratifies every craving sense, rejoices in the midnight revel, renders himself vile, and yet tells you he is in the chase of happiness. The ambitious man, conceiving that the great desideratum blossoms on the sceptre, and hangs in rich clusters from the throne, consumes one half of his life, and embitters the other half, in climbing the giddy elevation of royalty. All these, however, have confessed their disappointment; and have retired from the stage exclaiming, in reference to happiness, what Brutus, just before he stabbed himself, did in reference to virtue, "I have pursued thee every where, and found thee nothing but a name." This, however, is a mistake; for both virtue and happiness are glorious realities, and if they are not found, it is merely because they are not sought from the right sources.

We may affirm of pleasure what Job did of wisdom, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden

it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. But where shall" *happiness* "be found, and where is the place of" *enjoyment*? "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Whence then cometh" *happiness*, "and where is the place of" *enjoyment*? "seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did he see it and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, all her paths are peace."

Happiness has no other equivalent term than religion, and this is a moral synonymy.

If, indeed, the case were *otherwise*, and religion, so far as the present world is concerned, entailed nothing but wretchedness, yet, as it leads to eternal felicity in the world to come, it is most manifestly our interest to attend to its claims. The poor Hindoo devotee, who endures all kinds of tortures under the idea that it is the only way to eternal felicity, acts with perfect rationality, if you allow his data. A life protracted to the length of Methuselah's, and filled with penances and pilgrimages, should be willingly and thankfully endured, if salvation could be procured by no other means. In the prospect of eternity, with heaven spreading out its ineffable glories, and hell uncovering its dreadful horrors, the only question which a rational creature should allow himself to ask is, "What is necessary to avoid the torments of the one, and secure the felicities of the other?" and on being told "Religion," he should apply with all the energies of his soul to this great business, without scarcely allowing himself to ask whether its duties are pleasant or irksome. The man who is journeying to take possession of a kingdom, scarcely thinks it

worth his while to inquire whether the road be through a wilderness or a paradise. It is enough for him to know, that it is the only road to the throne. Hence, the representation of the *pleasures* of religion, is a sort of gratuity in this subject. It serves, however, to leave those still more destitute of excuse, who live in the neglect of piety ; and, in this view, may have still greater power to rouse the conscience.

1. That religion is pleasure, will appear, if you consider *what part of our nature it more particularly employs and gratifies.*

It is not the gratification of the *senses*, or of the animal part of our nature, but a provision for *the immaterial and immortal mind.* The mind of man is an image not only of God's spirituality, but of his infinity. It is not like the senses, limited to this or that kind of object ; as the sight intermeddles not with that which effects the smell ; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon, and takes them all in. It is, as I may say, an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. Now this is that part of

man to which the exercises of religion properly belong. The pleasures of the understanding, in the contemplation of truth, have been sometimes so great, so intense, so engrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other kind of pleasure. How short of this are the delights of the epicure ! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and of the thinking man ! Indeed, says Dr. South, as different as the silence of an Archimides in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. Nothing is comparable to the pleasures of mind ; these are enjoyed by the spirits above, by Jesus Christ, and the great and blessed God.

Think what objects religion brings before the mind, as the sources of its pleasure : no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature and in his works. For the eye of religion, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior nor an equal. The mind is conversant, in the exercises of piety, with all the most stupendous events that have ever occurred in the history of the universe, or

that ever will transpire till the close of time. The creation of the world ; its government by a universal Providence ; its redemption by the death of Christ ; its conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost ; its trial before the bar of God ; the immortality of the soul ; the resurrection of the body ; the certainty of an eternal existence ; the secrets of the unseen state ; subjects, all of them of the loftiest and sublimest kind, which have engaged the inquiries of the profoundest intellects, are the matter of contemplation to real piety. What topics are these for our reason, under the guidance of religion, to study ; what an ocean to swim in, what a heaven to soar in : what heights to measure, what depths to fathom. Here are subjects, which, from their infinite vastness, must be ever new, and ever fresh ; which can be never laid aside as dry or empty. If novelty is the parent of pleasure, here it may be found ; for although the subject itself is the same, some new view of it, some fresh discovery of its wonders, is ever bursting upon the mind of the devout and attentive inquirer after truth.

How then can religion be otherwise than

pleasant, when it is the exercise of the noble faculties of the mind, upon the sublimest topics of mental investigation ; the voluntary, excursive, endless pursuits of the human understanding in the region of eternal truth. Never was there a more interesting or important inquiry than that proposed by Pilate to the illustrious prisoner at his bar ; and if the latter thought it not proper to answer it, it was not to show that the question was insignificant, but to condemn the light and flippant manner in which a subject so important was taken up. Religion can answer the question, and with an ecstasy greater than that of the ancient mathematician, exclaims, "I have found it ; I have found it." The Bible is not only true, but TRUTH. It contains that which deserves this sublime emphasis. It settles the disputes of ages, and of philosophers, and makes known what is truth, and where it is to be found. It brings us from amongst the quicksands and shelves, and rocks of skepticism, ignorance, and error ; and shows us that goodly land, in quest of which, myriads of minds have sailed, and multitudes have been wrecked ; and religion is setting our foot on this

shore, and dwelling in the region of eternal truth.

2. That a religious life is pleasant, is evident from *the nature of religion itself*.

Religion is a principle of *spiritual life* in the soul. Now all the exercises and acts of vitality are agreeable. To see, to hear, to taste, to walk, are all agreeable, because they are the voluntary energies of inward life. So religion, in all its duties, is the exercise of a living principle in the soul: it is a new spiritual existence. Piety is a spiritual *taste*. Hence it is said, "If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious." No matter what the object of a taste is, the exercises of it are always agreeable. The painter goes with delight to his picture; the musician to his instrument; the sculptor to his bust; because they have a *taste* for these pursuits. The same feeling of delight attends the Christian to the exercises of godliness; and this is his language, "It is a good thing to give thanks, and to draw near to God. O how I love thy law! it is sweeter to my taste than honey. How amiable are thy tabernacles." Religion, where it is real, is the natural element

of a Christian ; and every creature rejoices in its own appropriate sphere. If you consider true piety with disgust, as a hard, unnatural, involuntary thing, you are totally ignorant of its nature, entirely destitute of its influence, and no wonder you cannot attach to it the idea of pleasure : but viewing it as it ought to be viewed, in the light of a new nature, you will perceive that it admits of most exalted delight.

3. Consider the *miseries which it prevents*.

It does not, it is true, prevent sickness, poverty, or misfortune : it does not fence off from the wilderness of this world, a mystic inclosure, within which the ills of life never intrude. No ; these things happen to all alike : but how small a portion of human wretchedness flows from these sources, compared with that which arises from the dispositions of the heart. "The mind is its own place, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Men carry the springs of their happiness or misery in their own bosom. Hence it is said of the wicked, "that they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, which is never at peace, but continually

casting up mire and dirt." In contrast with which, it is affirmed that "the work of righteousness is peace ; and that the good man shall be satisfied from himself." Would you behold the misery entailed by *pride*, look at Haman ; by *covetousness*, look at Ahab ; by *malice*, look at Cain ; by *profaneness* and *sensuality*, united with the forebodings of a guilty conscience, look at Belshazzar ; by *envy*, and a consciousness of being rejected of God, look at Saul ; by *revenge*, look at Herodias writhing beneath the accusations of John, and thirsting for his blood ; by *apostacy*, look at Judas. Religion would have prevented all this, and it will prevent similar misery in you. Harken to the confessions of the outcast in the land of his banishment ; of the felon in his irons, and in his dungeon ; of the prostitute expiring upon her bed of straw ; of the malefactor at the gallows—"Wretched creature that I am, abhorred of men, accursed of God ! To what have my crimes brought me !" Religion prevents all this ; all that wretchedness which is the result of crime, is cut off by the influence of genuine piety. Misery prevented is happiness gained.

4. Dwell upon the *privileges it confers*.

To a man who is a partaker of its genuine influence, all the sins he has committed, be they ever so numerous or so great, are all forgiven, and he is introduced to the bliss of pardoned guilt; he is restored to the favour of that Great Being, whose smile is life, and lights up heaven with joy; whose frown is death, and fills all hell with wo. But I cannot describe these privileges in such brilliant language as has been employed by a transatlantic author:—"Regeneration is of the highest importance to man, as a subject of the divine government. With his former disposition he was a rebel against God, and with this he becomes cheerfully an obedient subject. Of an enemy he becomes a friend; of an apostate he becomes a child. From the debased, hateful, miserable character of sin, he makes a final escape, and begins the glorious and eternal career of virtue. With his *character* his destination is equally changed; in his native condition he was a child of wrath, an object of abhorrence, and an heir of wo. Evil, in an unceasing, and interminable progress, was his lot; the regions of

sorrow and despair his everlasting home ; and fiends and fiend-like men his eternal companions. On his character good beings looked with detestation, and on his ruin with pity ; while evil beings beheld both with that satanic pleasure, which a reprobate mind can enjoy at the sight of companionship in turpitude and destruction.

“But when he becomes a subject of this great and happy change of character, all things connected with him are also changed. His unbelief, impenitence, hatred of God, rejection of Christ, and resistance of the Spirit of Grace, he has voluntarily and ingenuously renounced ; no more rebellious, impious, or ungrateful, he has assumed the amiable spirit of submission, repentance, confidence, hope, gratitude, and love. The image of his Maker is enstamped upon his mind, and begins there to shine with moral and eternal beauty. The seeds of immortality have there sprung up, as in a kindly soil ; and warmed by the life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and refreshed by the dewy influence of the Spirit of Grace, rise, and bloom and flourish with increasing vigour. In him sin and the

world and the flesh daily decay, and daily announce their approaching dissolution; while the soul continually assumes new life and virtue, and is animated with superior and undying energy. He is now a joint heir with Christ, and the destined inhabitant of heaven; the gates of glory and of happiness are already opened to receive him, and the joy of saints and angels has been renewed over his repentance; all around him is peace—all before him purity and transport. God is his Father; Christ his Redeemer; and the Spirit of truth his Sanctifier. Heaven is his eternal habitation; virtue is his immortal character; and cherubim and seraphim and all the children of light are his companions for ever. Henceforth he becomes of course a rich blessing to the universe; all good beings, nay, God himself, will rejoice in him for ever, as a valuable accession to the great kingdom of righteousness, as a real addition to the mass of created good, and as an humble, but faithful and honourable instrument of the everlasting praise of heaven. He is a vessel of infinite mercy; an illustrious trophy of the cross; a

gem in the crown of glory, which adorns the Redeemer of mankind.”*

Who, my children, can read this animated description of the privileges of true piety (and it is not an exaggerated account) without secretly longing to be a child of God? What are all the brightest distinctions of an earthly nature, after which envy pines in secret, or ambition rages in public, compared with this? Crowns are splendid baubles, gold is sordid dust, and all the gratifications of sense but vanity and vexation of spirit, when weighed against such splendid immunities as these.

5. Consider *the consolations it imparts.*

Our world has been called, in the language of poetry, a vale of tears, and human life a bubble, raised from those tears, and inflated by sighs, which, after floating a little while, decked with a few gaudy colours, is touched by the hand of death, and dissolves. Poverty, disease, misfortune, unkindness, inconstancy, death, all assail the travellers as they journey onward to eternity through this gloomy valley; and what is to comfort them but *religion*?

* Dwight's Sermon on Regeneration.

The consolations of religion are neither few nor small; they arise in part from those things which we have already mentioned in this chapter; *i. e.* from the exercise of the understanding on the revealed truths of God's word, from the impulses of the spiritual life within us, and from a reflection upon our spiritual privileges: but there are some others, which, though partially implied in these things, deserve a special enumeration and distinct consideration.

A good conscience, which the wise man says is a perpetual feast, sustains a high place amongst the comforts of genuine piety. It is unquestionably true, that a man's happiness is in the keeping of his conscience; all the sources of his felicity are under the command of this faculty. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" A troubled conscience converts a paradise into a hell, for it is the flame of hell kindled on earth; but a quiet conscience would illuminate the horrors of the deepest dungeon with the beams of heavenly day; the former has often rendered men like tormented fiends amidst an elysium of delights, while the latter has taught the songs of cherubim to martyrs in

the prison or the flames. Religion furnishes a good conscience ; by faith in the blood of Christ it takes away guilt towards God, and by a holy life it keeps the conscience clear towards man. It first makes it good by justification and then keeps it good by sanctification. What trouble may not a man bear beneath the smiles of an approving conscience ! If this be calm and serene, the storms of affliction, which rage without, can as little disturb the comfort of the mind, as the fury of the wintry tempest can do, to alarm the inhabitants of a well-built, well-stored mansion.

In addition to this, religion comforts the mind, with *with the assurance of an all-wise, all-pervading Providence*, so minute in its superintendence and control, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father ; a superintendence which is excluded from no point of space, no moment of time, and overlooks not the meanest creature in existence. Nor is this all ; for the word of God assures the believer that "*all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.*" Nothing that imagination could

conceive, is more truly consolatory than this, to be assured that all things, however painful at the time, not excepting the failure of our favourite scheme, the disappointment of our fondest hopes, the loss of our dearest comforts, shall be overruled by infinite wisdom for the promotion of our ultimate good. This is a spring of comfort whose waters never fail.

Religion consoles also *by making manifest some of the benefits of affliction, even at the time it is endured.* It crucifies the world, mortifies sin, quickens prayer, extracts the balmy sweets of the promises, endears the Saviour; and, to crown all, *it directs the mind to that glorious state, where the days of our mourning shall be ended:* that happy country where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying. Nothing so composes the mind, and helps it bear the load of trouble which God may lay upon it, as the near prospect of its termination. Religion shows the weather-beaten mariner the haven of eternal repose, where no storms arise, and the sea is ever calm; it exhibits to the weary traveller the city of habitation, within whose walls he will

find a pleasant home, rest from his labours, and friends to welcome his arrival : it discloses to the wounded warrior his native country, where the alarms of war, and the dangers of conflict, will be no more encountered, but undisturbed peace for ever reign. In that one word, HEAVEN, religion provides a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care.

Here then, is the pleasure of that wisdom which is from above ; it is not only enjoyed in prosperity, but continues to refresh us, and most powerfully to refresh us, in adversity ; a remark which will not apply to any other kind of pleasure.

In the hour of misfortune, when a man, once in happy circumstances, sits down, amidst the wreck of all his comforts, and sees nothing but the fragments of his fortune for his wife and family, what, in this storm of affliction, is to cheer him but religion ; and this *can* do it, and enable him to say, “although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will I

rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation !” What but *religion* can comfort the poor labourer in that gloomy season when times are bad, and work is scarce, and he hardly knows where to procure his next meal ? What can comfort the suffering female in that long and dreadful season, when, wasting away in a deep decline, she lies, night after night, consumed by fever, and day after day, convulsed by coughing ? Tell me, what can send a ray of comfort to her dark scene of wo, or a drop of consolation to her parched and thirsting lips, but *religion* ? And when the agonized parent, with a heart half broken by the conduct of a prodigal son, exclaims—“O ! who can tell how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child !” what, in that season of torture, can pour a drop of balm into the wounded spirit but *religion* ? And when we occupy the bed-side of a departed friend, “the dreadful post of observation darker every hour,” what but *religion* can sustain the mind, and calm the tumult of the soul ? what, but this, can enable us to bear with even tolerable composure, the pang of separation ? And we too must die : and

here is the excellence of piety ; it follows us, where no other friend can follow us, down into the dark valley of the shadow of death, stands by us when the last hand has quitted its grasp, reserves its mightiest energies for that most awful conflict, presents to the eye of faith the visions of glory rising up beyond the sepulchre, and angels advancing to receive us from the hand of earthly friends to bear us to the presence of a smiling God.

Other sources of pleasure are open only during the season of health and prosperity. Admitting that they were all which their most impassioned admirers contend for, what can balls, routs, plays, cards, do, in the season of sickness, misfortune, or death ? Alas ! alas ! they exist then only in recollection, and the recollection of them is painful.

6. The pleasures of religion appear in *the graces it implants*.

“ And now abideth these three, Faith, Hope, Charity.”

Faith is the leading virtue of Christianity.

To believe, in any case, where the report is welcome, and the evidence of its truth convincing, is a pleasing exercise of the mind ;

how much more so in this case, where the testimony to be believed is the glad tidings of salvation, and the evidence of its truth most entirely satisfactory? *Hope* is a most delightful exercise. The pleasures of *Hope* have formed a theme for the poet; and it is evident that these pleasures must be in proportion, to the importance of the object desired, and the grounds that exist to expect its accomplishment. What then must be the influence of that hope which is full of immortality, which has the glory of heaven for its object, and the truth of God for its basis! which, as it looks towards its horizon, sees the shadowy forms of eternal felicity, rising, expanding, brightening, and advancing, every moment. *Love* is a third virtue, implanted and cherished in the soul by religion. Need I describe the pleasures connected with a pure and virtuous affection? Religion is love—love of the purest and sublimest kind; this is its essence, all else, but its earthly attire, which it throws off as *Elijah* did his mantle, when it ascends to the skies. The delight of love must be in proportion to the excellence of its object, and the strength of its own propensity towards

that object. What then must be the pleasure of that love which has *God* as its object, and which consists in complacency in *his* glories, gratitude for his mercies submission to his will, and the enjoyment of his favour! This is a heavenly feeling, which brings us into communion with angels, and anticipates on earth the enjoyments of eternity. Submission, patience, meekness, gentleness, justice, compassion, zeal, are also among the graces which true religion implants in the human soul; which, like lovely flowers, adorn it with indescribable beauty, and refresh it with the most delicious fragrance.

7. Consider the *duties which religion enjoins*, and you will find in each of these a spring of hallowed pleasure.

How delightful an exercise is *prayer*! "Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempests; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness." It is pleasant to tell our sorrows to any one; how much more to him who is omnipotent in power, infallible in wisdom, and

infinite in compassion ! With prayer is connected *praise*, that elevated action of the soul, in which she seems at the time to be learning motion and melody from an angel. How pleasant an exercise is the *perusal of the scriptures* ! In prayer we speak to God, and in the Bible God speaks to us, and both confer upon us honour indescribable. Passing by the antiquity of its history, the pathos of its narratives, the beauty of its imagery, how sublime are its doctrines, how precious its promises, how free its invitations, how salutary its warnings, how intense its devotions ! “Precious Bible ! when weighed against thee, all other books are but as the small dust of the balance.” Nor less pleasant is *the holy remembrance of the Sabbath*. “I was glad,” exclaims the Christian, “when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord :” and there, when standing within the gates of Zion, surrounded with the multitude that keep holy day, he repeats, amidst the years of his manhood the song of his childhood, and from the fulness of his joy, he exclaims—

“Lord, how delightful ’tis to see
A whole assembly worship thee ;

At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

The sweetly-solemn engagements of *the sacramental feast* ; the flow of brotherly love, called forth by *social prayer*, together with the *ardour of benevolence*, inspired by the support of public religious institutions; in these exercises is true happiness to be found, if indeed it is to be found any where on earth.

8. As a last proof of the pleasures derived from religion, I may appeal to *the experience of its friends*. Here the evidences accumulate by myriads on earth, and millions in heaven. Who that ever felt its influence, will doubt its tendency to produce delight? Go, go, my children, to the saints of the most high God, and collect *their* testimony, and you shall be convinced "that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Go not to the Christian of *doubtful* character, for he has only just religion enough to make him miserable ; go to the most holy, and you shall find *them* the most happy.

And then there are also two or three other circumstances which are connected with the pleasures of religion that deserve attention.

It is pleasure that never satiates or wearies. Can the epicure, the voluptuary, the drunkard, the ball frequenter, say this of *their* delights? “How short is the interval, how easy the transition, between a pleasure and a burden. If sport refreshes a man when he is weary, it also wearies when he is refreshed. The most devoted pleasure-hunter in existence, were he bound to his sensual delights every day, would find it an intolerable burden, and fly to the spade and the mattock for a diversion from the misery of an unintermitted pleasure. Custom may render continued labour tolerable, but not continued pleasure. All pleasures that affect the body must needs weary, because they transport; and all transportation is violence; and no violence can be lasting, but determines upon the falling of the spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion, that the pleasure of the sense raises them to: and therefore how generally does an immoderate laughter end in a sigh, which is only nature’s recovering herself after a force done to it; but the religious pleasure of a well-disposed mind moves gently, and therefore constantly; it does not affect by rapture and

ecstasy, but is like the pleasure of health, which is still and sober, yet greater and stronger than those which call up the senses with grosser and more affecting impressions."

And as all the grosser pleasures of sense weary, and all the sports and recreations soon pall upon the appetite, so, under some circumstances, do the more elevated enjoyments of exalted rank, agreeable company, and lively conversation; it is religion alone that preserves an unfading freshness, an undying charm, an inexhaustible power to please; it is this alone of all our pleasures which never cloy, never surfeits, but increases the appetite the more it gratifies it, and leaves it, after the richest feast, prepared and hungry for a still more splendid banquet.

And then another ennobling property of the pleasure that arises from religion, is, *that as the sources and the seat of it are in a man's own breast, it is not in the power of any thing without him to destroy it, or take it away.* Upon God alone is he dependant for its enjoyment. Upon how many other agents, and upon what numerous contingencies, over which he can exercise no control, is the votary of

worldly pleasure dependant for *his* bliss. How many things which he cannot command, are necessary to make up the machinery of his schemes. What trifles may disappoint him of his expected gratification, or rob him of his promised delights. A variable atmosphere, or a human mind, no less variable ; a want of punctuality in others, or a want of health in himself: these, and a thousand other things, might be enumerated as circumstances, upon the mercy of each one of which the enjoyment of worldly pleasure depends. "But the good man shall be satisfied from himself." "Whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him," said Jesus Christ, "shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The piety of his heart, produced by the Holy Ghost, is this well-spring of pleasure, which a good man carries every where with him, wherever he goes. He is independent of all the contingencies of life for his bliss. "It is an easy and a portable pleasure, such an one as he carries about in his bosom, without alarming the eye or the envy of the world. A man putting all his pleasures

into this one, is like a traveller putting all his goods, as it were, into one jewel ; the value is the same, and the convenience greater. ”

“ Nor is this kind of pleasure out of the reach of any outward violence only ; but even those things also, which make a closer impression upon us, which are the irresistible decays of nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when age itself, which of all things in the world will not be baffled or defied, shall begin to arrest, sieze, and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, and deadness of limbs, and dulness of senses, yet then the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth, vigour, and freshness. A palsy may as soon shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the delight of conscience ; for it lies within, it centres in the heart, it grows into the very substance of the soul, so that it accompanies a man to his grave ; he never outlives it, and that for this cause only, because he cannot outlive him. ”

How comes it to pass then, that in opposition to all this, the opinion has gained ground that religion leads to melancholy ? *The irre-*

ligious judge of it by their own feelings ; and as *they* are not conscious of any pleasurable emotions, excited by sacred things, they conclude that others are in like manner destitute of them. But is *their* testimony to be received, before that of the individual who has tried and found it by experience to be bliss? Again, irreligious people form their opinion *by what they see in many professors*, some of whom, though professing godliness, are destitute of its power ; and being more actuated by a spirit of the world than of piety, are strangers to the peace that passeth understanding ; others are not yet brought out of that deep dejection, with which the earlier stages of conviction are sometimes attended. The sinner, when first arrested in his thoughtless career, is filled with deep dismay, and the most poignant grief ; reviewed in this state of mind, his appearance may produce the idea that religion is the parent of melancholy. But wait, he that sows in tears shall reap in joy. His tears, like showers in summer from a dark and lowering cloud, carry off the gloom which they first caused, portend a clearer and a cooler atmosphere, and are ultimately followed by the bright shining of the sun.

An unfavourable impression against religion is sometimes produced by *the constitutional gloom* of some of its genuine disciples. It should be recollected, that in these cases, religion does not cause the dejection, for this would have existed had there been no piety. All that can be said is, that it does not cure it, which is not to be expected, unless piety pretended to exert an influence over the physical nature of man.

The supposition that piety leads to melancholy is also founded, in part, *on the self-denying duties which the word of God enjoins*. Penitence, self-denial, renunciation of the world, willingness to take up the cross, and follow after Christ, are unquestionably required, and must be truly found in the genuine Christian. Hence, the worldling thinks it impossible, but that with such duties, should be associated the most sullen and miserable state of mind. Little does he imagine, that the pleasures which religion has to offer for those she requires us to abandon, are like the orb of day to the glow-worm of the hedge, or the meteor of the swamp; and that for every moment's self-de-

nial she requires us to endure, she has a million ages of ineffable delight to bestow.

“And now upon the result of all, I suppose that to exhort men to be religious, is only in other words to exhort them to take their pleasure—a pleasure, high, rational, and angelical—a pleasure embased with no appendant sting, no consequent loathing, no remorse or bitter farewells : but such an one, as being honey in the mouth, never turns to gall in the belly : a pleasure made for the soul and the soul for that ; suitable to its spirituality and equal to its capacities : such an one as grows fresher upon enjoyment, and though continually fed upon, is never devoured : a pleasure that a man may call as properly his own, as his soul and his conscience ; neither liable to accident, nor exposed to injury ; it is the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity : in a word, it is such an one as being begun in grace, passes into glory, blessedness, and immortality ; and those joys that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive !”

HAPPINESS—WHERE IS IT?

Is it in wealth? Go, probe the breast
Of fortune's favorite heir :
And why doth woe that heart infest,
And anguish canker there ?

Is it in fame? Its empty breath,
Inconstant as the breeze,
Will blast, ere long, the laurel wreath
That late it formed to please.

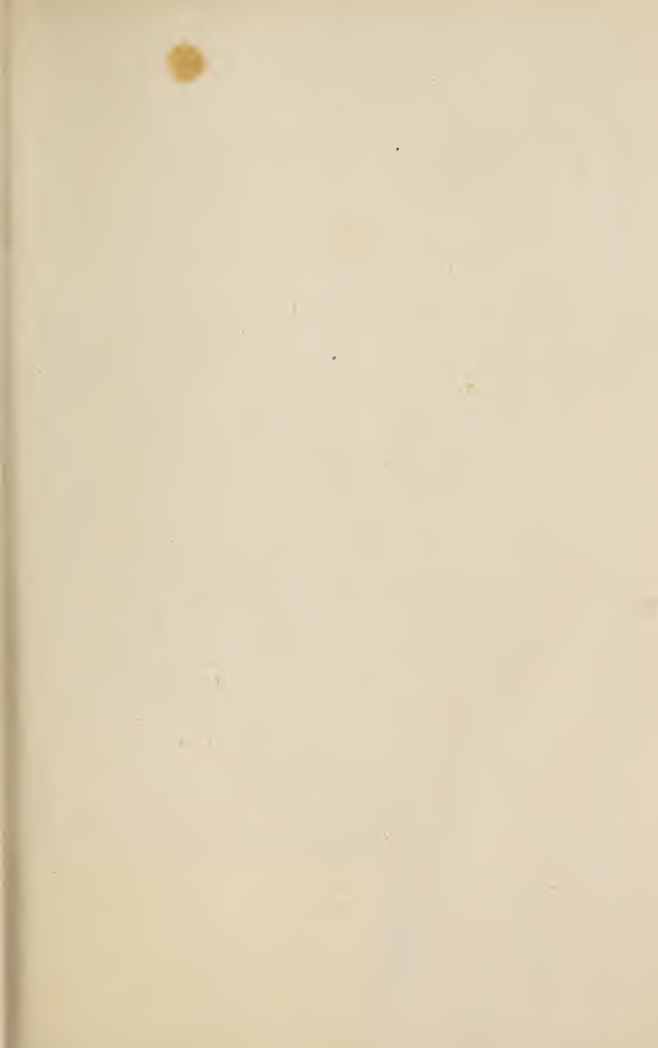
Is it in friendship, or in love ?
Alas! they soon decay :
The tears of disappointment prove
How feeble is their stay.

'Tis not in all that here excels,
'Tis not in Folly's round ;
Look upward, mortal, there it dwells,
And only there is found.

W. B. T.

FINIS.





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